

SOME STOCK WILLS

Charles Phillips

Stock from 1556 to 1580. In his will of 1557 (P.C.C., Noode, 30) there is the following :

‘Item I give to euerye one dwelling in the parsonage of Stoke iis.’

On one occasion the testator arranged for two funeral sermons to be preached :

Robert Bundocke, 1578 (A. of E., Brewer, 200).

‘Item I will that Mr. Redredge make two sermons the one to be preached by him at Ramsdon aforesayde and the other at Downham and my executrix hereafter named to content him for his paynes.’

In 1585 Joane Dale of Stock (A. of E., Draper, 70) made these bequests :

‘Item I geue to the poore ministeres five pounds to be destributed at the discreacon of Mr. John Butler of Tolye Esquier withen one yeare next after my decease.’

‘Item I geue to my daughter Mundes . . . my mare, saddle, saddle-clothe, pillian . . .’

An interesting example of a nuncupative will is that of Jane Pierson, in 1589 (A. of E., Maynard, 31) :

‘Jane Pierson mayde Servaunt with William Lambert of Ramsdon Belhouse . . . declared her last wyll and testament nuncupative that is to saye by worde of mouthe. . . .’

Being demanded of Agnes Browne Johan Awcocke and Margaret Lambert the wife of Roberte Lamberte wch three attended her and kepte her in her sickness and theis iiii demanded of her to whom she wolde dispose and give her goodes. She answered you shall have yt amonge you. In wytnes whereof wee Agnes Browne her marke. Johan Awcocke her marke. Margaret Lambert her marke.’

The bequests of Margaret Arnott, of Stock, in 1592 (A. of E., Stephen, 74) have an old-world sound about them :

‘Item I giue unto Bennit my dawghter . . . my greatest brasse pott my greatest kettell.

. . . . Item I giue unto Marie my dawghter the least candlesticke.

. . . . I giue unto Thomas an owlde greate Charte standing in the owlde Chamber and my best Cheste in the Chamber.

. . . . I giue unto Thomas the greate spitt.

I giue unto Marie . . . a locrom sheete.

Edward James, of Stock, who made his will in 1601, bequeathed two hives of bees :

‘Item I giue and bequeath unto ye said John Clark one hiue of Bees.

Item I give and bequeath unto Joane Harris the daughter of John Harris, of Stock, one hiue of bees.’

Robert Booth, Rector of Ramsden Bellhouse, made his will in 1605 (Consistory Court of London, Bishops Books, Sperin). One of his bequests was as follows :

'Also I give all the Beste of my apparell and all my bookes (excepte one booke Called destructorium viciorum wch I give to my Cozen Thomas Boothe) to my twee brothers namely George and Thomas Boothe.'

The nuncupative will of Richard Seamer the Elder, potter,

of Ramsden Bellhouse, 1612 (Commissary of London, Essex and Herts, 1431-1619) introduces us to some old-time coins :

'Item he gave unto Richard Seamer the sonne of his sonne Richard . . . an Elizabeth Rioll.

'Item he gave . . . unto his Children and to his Childrens' Children nine Edward twelve pence, and unto Marie Seamer he bequeathed two Edward xiids.

. . . And he did ordayne George denison and Nathaniell Kinge his ouerseers . . . and he gave them for their paines tenne groates a peece.'

Zephaniah Peirce (Peirse) Rector of Stock, who made his will in 1703 (Consistory Court of London, 1670-1706, page 131), made some unusual bequests to his son :

'I further give unto my Son Zephenia Peirse all my Library of Bookes Noates and Manuscripts whatsoever and all my gold rings in my Study and six pieces of old gold and one double guiney peece of gold I likewise give and my mind is my son Zephaniah Pearse shall have all my Guns and Pistolls.'

John Surridge, of Ramsden Bellhouse, was one to whom character meant something, for in his will of 1714 (Commissary of London, Essex and Herts, Backhouse, 392) there is this :

'Item I give to my daughter Mary Surridge ye sume of ten pounds and if she takes a good Course it shall be made up twelve pounds.'

Alexander Jephson, Rector of Ramsden Bellhouse, made his will in 1733 (P.C.C., Oakham, 86) and in it named the position for his grave :

'My Body I desire may be decently buried at the West End of my Church yard according to the Discretion of my Executrix' and his brick grave is to be seen there today.